



An Overview of the
Planning &
Zoning Process Within

**COMMERCIAL
REVITALIZATION
DISTRICTS AND AREAS**

FAIRFAX COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
ZONING

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WHAT IS A COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION DISTRICT?

On October 12, 1998, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors amended the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance to create five (5) Commercial Revitalization Districts within Fairfax County; two (2) Commercial Revitalization Areas were also designated. The purpose of these designations is to encourage economic development activities in the older commercial areas of the County by providing for specific regulations and administrative procedures to promote the continued viability and redevelopment of these districts/areas by providing more flexibility within certain zoning regulations and by having urban design measures such as streetscape and landscaping. The facilitated administrative procedures apply to all properties within the five (5) Commercial Revitalization Districts and the two (2) Commercial Revitalization Areas.

The Zoning Ordinance contains separate provisions for each of the five (5) Commercial Revitalization Districts, which are designed to overlay the other zoning districts. This means that a parcel of land is subject to the zoning regulations of the zoning district in which it is located, as modified by the regulations of the Commercial Revitalization District.

The five (5) Commercial Revitalization Districts and two (2) Commercial Revitalization areas within Fairfax County are as follows:

**Commercial
Revitalization Districts**

**Zoning
Ordinance Section**

Annandale	Sect. A7-100
Bailey's Crossroads/Seven Corners	Sect. A7-200
McLean	Sect. A7-300
Richmond Highway	Sect. A7-400
Springfield	Sect. A7-500

**Commercial
Revitalization Areas**

Lake Anne
Merrifield

Maps outlining the parcels of land contained within each Commercial Revitalization District or Area are available for inspection in the Department of Planning and Zoning as well as other County agencies involved in the review of development proposals, including the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development. While the Board has not yet adopted Commercial Revitalization Districts for the Lake Anne and Merrifield Commercial Revitalization Areas, staff will provide the facilitated administrative procedures in these areas according to boundaries outlined by staff.

Additional background information on the Commercial Revitalization Districts and Areas (staff reports, information handouts, etc.) is also available from the Department of Planning and Zoning.



ZONING ORDINANCE PROVISIONS

In an effort to enhance opportunities for development and redevelopment in older commercial areas, changes to the Zoning Ordinance and development processes were adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The adopted Zoning Ordinance revisions recognize that redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts in these areas are especially challenged by parcels that may be encumbered with underutilized or dilapidated structures; lot configurations which may require special consideration to become suitable for development; and, the need for appropriate transitions to adjacent residential areas. It is believed that these revisions to the Zoning Ordinance, as well as the other changes to the development review process described below, will facilitate reinvestment activity for the revitalization areas, thereby improving the appearance and economic vitality of these areas. As experience is gained from implementation of these regulations, other modifications to the Zoning Ordinance and development review processes may become apparent and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

The provisions of the Commercial Revitalization Districts are intended to accommodate renovations and changes to existing developments, as well as to foster redevelopment and new development. The provisions are designed to alleviate constraints posed by a lot pattern in the commercial revitalization areas that is generally of small irregularly shaped parcels. The adopted regulations also allow flexibility for administrative approvals of reduced front yards, parking requirements, transitional and parking lot landscaping

requirements, and greater building heights in certain districts consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Commercial Revitalization District so as to facilitate much needed renovation or redevelopment. The adopted Zoning Ordinance amendments primarily focus on changes in regulations which would be effective in the retail commercial districts of the Zoning Ordinance (C-5 through C-8), which are the predominant zoning districts of the five revitalization districts. Since the predominant zoning in Merrifield is industrial and residential, and the zoning in Lake Anne is Planned Residential Community (PRC), a different approach is required for these areas. Special planning studies are on-going in these two areas. As these two areas progress in their Special Studies, appropriately tailored Zoning Ordinance modifications will be considered.

**A summary of the recently adopted changes
are as follows:**

- Allows a height increase by right from 40 to 50 feet in C-6 and C-8 Districts.
- Reduces the minimum required front yard in all commercial districts to 20 feet or if a yard dimension is specified in the Comprehensive Plan which is the same or less than the underlying zoning district requirement, the Comprehensive Plan dimension applies.
- Provides that open space requirements do not apply to expansions/enlargements of existing uses provided the expansion/enlargement does not decrease the amount of existing open space on the lot.
- Allows 20% by right reduction in the parking requirement for all nonresidential uses.

- Allows Director of Department of Public Works and Environmental Services approval of off-site parking for nonresidential uses 500' walking distance of building entrance or with the use of valet/shuttle service.
- Provides that the requirement for ground level parking spaces to be 10 feet from front lot line is not applicable.
- Allows nonconforming signs to be removed and replaced with smaller signs.
- Allows specified reductions and modifications in parking lot landscaping, screening and tree cover requirements for expansions/enlargements of existing uses.
- Allows specified modifications for certain required improvements on minor site plans.
- Allows an abbreviated Best Management Practice exception process with no application fee for certain minor site plans.
- Establishes a new Category 6 special exception use to allow consideration of all requested modifications/waivers or uses, to include requests related to site development waivers such as open space, FARs and building heights as well as uses allowed by special exception. New flexibilities allowed under this special exception use include allowing a greater percentage of office use in the C-8 District and modifications/waivers of all minimum yard requirements.

For additional information on the Commercial Revitalization District regulations, contact the Zoning Administration Division at **324-1314**.



CONCURRENT PROCESSING OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AND A ZONING APPLICATION

Concern has been expressed that significant opportunities for reinvestment in older commercial areas may at times be negatively impacted due to the time it takes to have amendments to the Comprehensive Plan considered. This delay may discourage proposals that further implementation of revitalization objectives. As a result, a process for the concurrent review and consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment with a zoning application has been established for all of the County's Commercial Revitalization Districts and Areas.

By using concurrent processing, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors can consider an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in the same time frame as they are considering the merits of a rezoning or special exception applications. In this instance, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors' public hearings for the rezoning or special exception application will be scheduled to occur soon after the Board of Supervisors' public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan amendment.

The concurrent processing of a Comprehensive Plan amendment with a zoning application is reserved for specific development proposals requiring a zoning application which address at least one of the following revitalization objectives:

- Elimination of a blighted property identified on the County's Blight Abatement Inventory;

- New development that will increase employment by at least 25 full-time employees;
- Consolidation of two or more parcels totaling at least two (2) acres for a new development or redevelopment project; or
- A proposal that may not meet the objectives listed above, but which significantly advances the Revitalization Goal, Objectives, or Policies, as set forth in the Policy Plan element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Concurrent processing will be undertaken based on a motion that is approved by the Board of Supervisors. It is intended that concurrent processing will be reserved for specific development proposals that have been filed (rezoning or special exception application, for example), have been identified to have Comprehensive Plan conflicts, and are committed to occur in the near term.

For additional information on the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, contact the Planning Division in the Department of Planning and Zoning at **324-1210**.



PRIOR TO FILING A ZONING APPLICATION

The Zoning Evaluation Division is responsible for processing zoning applications. Within the Zoning Evaluation Division, a "lead planner" has been assigned to each Commercial Revitalization District and Area. The lead planner works with

a team of specialists from other review agencies to process the zoning application. The lead planner is also available to conduct pre-application meetings with prospective applicants, to answer questions, and to provide additional information, as required. To contact the lead planner for a Commercial Revitalization District or Area, call the Zoning Evaluation Division at **324-1290**.

Application Acceptance staff in the Zoning Evaluation Division are also available to answer questions and provide assistance to prospective applicants interested in filing a zoning application. They may also be contacted at **324-1290**. Zoning application information packets are available for pick-up at the Zoning Evaluation Division or can be mailed to prospective applicants upon request.

Prior to filing a rezoning or special exception application, it is recommended that prospective applicants contact the Planning Commissioner and Supervisor of the Magisterial District in which the proposed application is located to gain feedback on the proposal and to learn more about the citizen review process in that district. Please refer to the back panel of this brochure for the names and phone numbers of the Planning Commissioners and Supervisors.



FILING AND ACCEPTANCE OF ZONING APPLICATIONS

Helpful time saving hints for filing a zoning application:

- Arrange for a pre-application meeting with the lead

planner as early as possible so that applications can be tailored to meet submission requirements and to address anticipated development related issues.

- Note on the application that it is located in a particular Commercial Revitalization District or Area.
- Ensure that the application submission is complete and accurate.
- Ensure that all parts of the application submission are filed at the same time.

The filing and acceptance of an application that is located within a Commercial Revitalization District or Area is given priority processing in the following manner:

- Priority review and acceptance; extra assistance in rectifying any submission related deficiencies.
- Once an application is accepted, the file is flagged to identify it as a Commercial Revitalization District /Area application for priority processing.
- Priority distribution of application information to other review agencies for comments.
- Additional distribution of application information to the Chairman of the applicable Commercial Revitalization District Committee (see External Coordination) and to the Site Review Branch of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (see Facilitated Review of Zoning Applications) for rezoning and special exception applications.



EXPEDITED SCHEDULING OF ZONING APPLICATIONS

All rezoning and special exception applications must go through a two (2) step public hearing process. The first public hearing is held by the Planning Commission, which makes an advisory recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The second public hearing is held by the Board, which makes the actual decision on the application. Special permit and variance applications are heard and acted on by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The Zoning Evaluation Division is responsible for the scheduling of all zoning application public hearings before the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and Board of Zoning Appeals. All accepted applications located within a Commercial Revitalization District/Area are given priority scheduling, as follows:

- All such applications are automatically expedited. No motion by the Board of Supervisors or Board of Zoning Appeals is required to obtain this expedited status. Every effort will be made to schedule applications in the shortest time frame possible.
- The scheduling of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors' public hearing dates for all rezoning and special exception applications will be such that the Board of Supervisors' public hearing date will be scheduled immediately following the Planning Commission public hearing date, thus saving time. This will require only one concurrent written

legal notification to be completed by the applicant (instead of two separate ones).



EXTERNAL COORDINATION

Applicants should also be aware of the following coordination that occurs outside of the County staff review for rezoning and special exception applications. As previously mentioned, applicants should coordinate closely with the applicable Supervisor's office early in the process to determine appropriate coordination efforts.

- Applicants should coordinate with the Commercial Revitalization District Review Committee that has been established for each district/area. The Committee is comprised of local business owners, citizens, and other interested persons who review all proposed rezoning and special exception applications and make recommendations.
- Applicants may be requested to make presentations to one or more civic associations located near a proposed rezoning or special exception application.



FACILITATED REVIEW OF ZONING APPLICATIONS

A facilitated process has been established for the review of zoning applications that are located within a Commercial

Revitalization District or Area. This process utilizes a "team" approach for the review of such applications. Experts in various areas of professional responsibility (land use, environment, transportation, etc.) will work together under the lead planner from the Zoning Evaluation Division. A site reviewer from the Site Review Division of the Office of Site Development Services in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services will be a member of the team so as to identify engineering issues that may impact site plan review and approval. This approach should result in a faster, more comprehensive review, with issues being identified earlier in the process.

The review team will work closely with the applicant throughout the process. Meetings between the applicant and the staff team will be held to go over the results of the staff's review and analysis and to negotiate resolution of identified issues. The staff will be able to respond to technical questions and provide detailed information to the applicant since all members of the team will be present at meetings, as required. This will facilitate the review process and eliminate the need for additional meetings that might otherwise be required to resolve issues.

In addition to the team approach described above, several concurrent processing opportunities are available to facilitate the review of development proposals. These include:

- Concurrent processing of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment with a rezoning or special exception application, if such is necessary (see Concurrent Processing of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and a Zoning Application).

- Concurrent processing of a site plan with a rezoning or special exception application.
- Addressing waivers and modifications typically related to site plans at the time of zoning approval to save time and money.

After a zoning application has been approved, the lead planner will continue to coordinate closely with the Site Review Division of the Office of Site Development Services in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. The lead planner will inform the Site Review Division of the outcome of the approval, including any issues that may have surfaced during the public hearing process. In addition, the lead planner will be available, in order to facilitate the implementation of the project through the engineering and building plan approval processes.



FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The following is a list of the members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and their office phone numbers.

Supervisor	District	Phone
Katherine K. Hanley, Chairman	At-Large	324-2321
Gerald W. Hyland, Vice-Chairman	Mount Vernon	780-7518
Sharon Bulova	Braddock	425-9300
Gerald E. Connolly	Providence	560-6946

Robert B. Dix, Jr.	Hunter Mill	478-0283
Michael R. Frey	Sully	378-9393
Penelope A. Gross	Mason	256-7717
Dana Kauffman	Lee	971-6262
Elaine McConnell	Springfield	451-8873
Stuart Mendelsohn	Dranesville	356-0551



FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The following is a list of the members of the Fairfax County Planning Commission. All Planning Commissioners may be reached by phone by calling the Planning Commission Office at 324-2865.

Planning Commissioner	District
Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Chairman	Springfield
John R. Beyers, Vice Chairman	Mount Vernon
Suzanne F. Harsel, Secretary	Braddock
Alvin L. Thomas, Parliamentarian	At-Large
Walter L. Acorn	At-Large
Carl A.S. Coan, Jr.	Providence
Judith W. Downer	Dranesville
Janet R. Hall	Mason
John B. Kelso	Lee
Ronald W. Koch	Sully
John M. Palatiello	Hunter Mill
Laurie Frost Wilson	At-Large

For additional information, contact:

**Department of Planning and Zoning
12055 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5505**

Zoning Evaluation Division, Suite 801
Telephone: **(703) 324-1290**

Planning Division, 7th Floor
Telephone: **(703) 324-1210**

Zoning Administration Division, Suite 807
Telephone: **(703) 324-1314**



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):
Reasonable accommodation is available upon 7
days advance notice. For additional information
on ADA call (703) 324-1334.

